

Message Text

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16

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CU-02 OPR-02 A-01 IO-10 AID-05

SCCT-01 SY-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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USSS-00 EB-07 AGR-05 COME-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 EA-06 OC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4185

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4774

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJ: ZAMETCHA AND LAND REFORM SPARK UNREST IN JIMMA

AREA

1. ON APRIL 19-20 TRIP TO JIMMA, THE CAPITAL OF KAFFA PROVINCE, EMBOFF LEARNED OF UNREST, SEVERAL DEATHS, AND DISRUPTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL FROM RELIABLE LOCAL SOURCES. EMBASSY NOW INFORMED THAT STUDENTS AND ZAMETCHOCH CLASHED ON APRIL 21 WITH JIMMA TOWNSMEN OPPOSING THEM, THEIR RADICAL POLICIES AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR.

2. LOCAL STATE-OWNED BANK MANAGER ASSERTED KAFFA PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR ABA BIYA HAD GIVEN ZAMATCHOCH STATIONED IN JIMMA AREA

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IN EFFECT CARTE BLANCHE TO CARRY OUT LAND, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND

SOCIAL REFORMS. ZAMETCHOCH, IN LEAGUE WITH LOCAL STUDENTS ("SOME OF THE MOST RADICAL IN ETHIOPIA"), HAVE REPORTEDLY SET UP THEIR OWN COURTS AND JAILS AND HAVE EVEN SEIZED, BOUND AND JAILED SEVERAL POLICEMEN IN OUTLYING VILLAGES IN JIMMA REGION. THIS WAS CONFIRMED BY SEVERAL SOURCES. PEASANTS HAVE REPORTEDLY KILLED SEVERAL LANDLORDS AT INSTIGATION OF ZAMETCHOCH.

3. MANAGER CONFIRMED THE RUMOR THAT FOUR ZAMETCHA-INFLUENCED PEASANTS HAD BEEN KILLED BY ONE CORNERED, ELDERLY, IRATE LANDLORD WHO HAD GIVEN UP HIS HOLDINGS BUT WAS BEING PRESSED TO GIVE UP HIS HOME ALSO. LANDLORD IS NOW IN JAIL.

4. JIMMA POLICE ARE REPORTEDLY ANGRY WITH ZAMETCHOCH-LOCAL STUDENTS' POWER AND LACK OF RESPECT FOR LAW AND ORDER. EMBOFF WAS TOLD POLICE AND LOCAL BURGHERS DEMONSTRATED IN JIMMA APRIL 18 AGAINST ZAMETCHA AND DEMANDED REMOVAL OF GOVERNOR ABA BIYA (WHO WAS IN ADDIS ATTENDING A SEMINAR FOR REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS). NOTE: ABA BIYA ABU JOBIR IS AT THE SONE OF TRADITIONAL 80-PLUS YEAR OLD KAFFA GALLA "KING." END NOTE. DEMONSTRATORS PROTESTED THAT ABA BIYA HAD FAILED TO PROTECT LOCAL CITIZENRY FROM THE ZAMETCHOCH, HAD ALLOWED THE LATTER TO ATTEMPT ILL-CONCEIVED RADICAL REFORMS INJURIOUS TO LOCAL INHABITANTS AND HAD LOST CIVIL CONTROL OF THE AREA. COMMENT: ABA BIYA, THE WELL-EDUCATED SCION OF THE TRADITIONAL LEADER OF THE MUSLIM GALLAS IN KAFFA, IS TRYING TO SURVIVE. IN SEEKING TO SATISFY AND/OR PROTECT THE "DIRG" IN ADDIS AND ITS SELF-APPOINTED LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES (ZAMETCHOCH AND STUDENTS), AND THE LOCAL MUSLIM MAJORITY WHO HAD BEEN "COLONIZED" BY HIGHLAND AMHARAS IN THE PAST AS WELL AS HIS CLASS-PEERS, HE IS ENCOUNTERING PREDICTABLE DIFFICULTIES. WE UNDERSTAND THAT MOST POLICE IN AREA COME FROM OUTSIDE KAFFA PROVINCE; MANY ARE SMALL-SCALE ABSENTEE LANDLORDS; MANY ARE AMHARAS. END COMMENT.

5. JIMMA'S USIS LIBRARIAN REPORTED THAT ON APRIL 21, ZAMETCHA-STUDENT SUPPORTERS OF ABA BIYA CLASHED WITH ANTI-GOVERNOR TOWNSMEN. POLICE MADE SEVERAL ARRESTS. SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED BUT SITUATION IS CALMER TODAY.

6. ADDING TO SOCIAL DISRUPTION IN JIMMA REGION IS THE LARGE NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED WHO HAVE LOST JOBS AT THE NEARBY NEWLY NATIONALIZED COFFEE PLANTATIONS. THESE HUNGRY, JOBLESS PEOPLE MILL AROUND AND
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SLEEP ON JIMMA SIDEWALKS WAITING FOR CLARIFICATION OF LAND REFORM AND THE ECONOMIC SITUATION. EMBOFF WAS TOLD THAT THE UNEMPLOYED HAD RECENTLY BEEN REDUCED IN NUMBER WHEN THE EPMG ORDERED APPROXIMATELY 600 TO WORK ON THREE LARGE AND NEARLY ABANDONED COFFEE ESTATES IN THE REGION.

7. INDICATIVE OF THE DIRECTION ZAMETCHA AND AT LEAST SOME OFFICIAL EPMG AGENCIES ARE TAKING WAS THE WINDOW DISPLAY IN THE LOCAL OFFICE

OF THE EPMG MININFO. THE DISPLAY CONSISTED PRIMARILY OF CHICOM LITERATURE (IN ENGLISH). A LARGE SIGN ON WINDOW (IN AMHARIC AND ENGLISH) PRESCRIBED SELECTED PASSAGES FROM MAO'S WORKS FOR READING. SIGN CONCLUDED: "BE SURE TO READ MAO."

8. COMMENT: THE SITUATION IN AND AROUND JIMMA MAY BE COMING TO A HEAD. ALTHOUGH MOST LARGER SCALE LAND OWNERS HAVE LEFT THE AREA, SOME ARE RESISTING BOTH ZAMETCHOCH AND LAND REFORM. FROM MOST SIGNS, RESISTANCE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE IS ISOLATED AND UNCOORDINATED, BUT IT APPEARS TO BE COALESCING IN JIMMA CITY. THE MEDIATION OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN THE JIMMA REGION WOULD BE A MAJOR EPMG ACHIEVEMENT. CONTINUED UNREST, HOWEVER, WITH POSSIBLE DIRECT CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN ACTIVIST RADICAL AND CORNERED CONSERVATIVE FACTIONS SEEMS THE MORE LIKELY PROSPECT AT PRESENT.
HUMMEL

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